

[Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided. He then continued in English.]

Prime Minister Harper. And I can repeat the same thing quickly, if you don't mind. Forgive us; that's how we speak Spanish in the north. [Laughter] Wonderful to be here. Thank you for the welcome, President Fox. I think we stand here in a historic

site, a symbol here of our determination to build a new future for all inhabitants of North America. And I am honored to be with President Bush and President Fox and look forward to our discussions.

President Bush. *Gracias, señor.*

President Fox. *Bienvenidos.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico in Cancun March 30, 2006

President Fox. We are ready. Good afternoon. I would like to welcome President Bush to Quintana Roo, to Cancun, and to Mexico. It is a great honor to have him here, particularly in this place in Cancun, which is all set and receiving many visitors. But the best visitors are President Bush and Prime Minister Harper, with our working agenda that will be fruitful and positive for the three countries in Latin America.

Some words from Mr. Bush.

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you very much. First of all, thanks for inviting us to Cancun. It's such a beautiful part of the world. The hospitality is magnificent. I know you were hit hard by hurricanes, which reminds me that I need to thank you and the Mexican people for your strong support and help after Hurricane Katrina.

I will never forget being on the—in the gulf coast area of my country, helping people—lift people's spirits. And we went to a school that had been destroyed by Katrina, a little elementary school. And there was the Navy construction team working side by side with members of the Mexican Navy. It was a great sign of cooperation, and it reflects the spirit of friendship that defines the relationship between our two countries and defines our personal relationship.

When you were speaking, I thought about the first time I went to visit you. I was newly elected and flew down to your fantastic ranch. And that started a very important relationship. And I think it's important for the people of our countries to know that while we haven't agreed on every single issue, that nevertheless, we work in the spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Today we had a very important discussion. We discussed border security. The President understands, and I understand, we have an obligation to secure our borders. And I want to thank your Government for sending out such a strong statement about the need for—that the shared responsibility we have. In other words, border security is not just one country's prerogative; it's the prerogative and duty of both countries. And we spent time talking about how to work together to continue to strengthen that cooperation necessary to do our duty.

I also appreciate the President's work to enforce Mexico's southern border. It's a difficult job, but nevertheless, the President shared with me the strategies he's employing to do that job as well.

Obviously, the migration issue came up. I told the President there is a legislative process that's going forward, and that it may look cumbersome to some, but that's

how our democracy works. I told the President that I am committed to having a comprehensive immigration bill on my desk. And by “comprehensive” I mean not only border security—a bill that has border security in it, a bill that has interior enforcement in it, but a bill that has a worker permit program in it. And that’s an important part of having a border that works.

We don’t want people sneaking into our country that are going to do jobs Americans won’t do; we want them coming in, in an orderly way, which will take pressure off of both our borders. And I explained to the President my vision of the citizenship issue. I don’t believe somebody should be allowed to come into our country and get ahead of the line, the citizenship line.

And so I told President Fox that I think a program that will work is somebody working on a temporary basis with a tamper-proof ID card. And if they want to become a citizen, they can get in line but not the head of the line. And I reminded the President I called for an increase of green cards the other day in Washington, DC, as one way to help manage this issue.

But at any rate, we’re in the middle of a legislative process. I’m optimistic we can get a bill done, and I look forward to continuing to work with members of both parties to get a bill done.

We also talked about President Fox’s vision of working together in our hemisphere, particularly in Central America. And he’s proposed a very innovative set of ideas to help stabilize and help encourage growth in Central America, starting with an energy initiative. And of course we appreciate your leadership on that issue, and I look forward to sending some of our experts down to listen to the ideas being talked about.

One idea, of course, we want to inject in the conversation is the idea of developing alternatives to gasoline that comes from crude oil, that we’d like to see more use of ethanol, and how we can work together to increase the crops necessary to

become the feedstock for an ethanol production.

But at any rate, the point I’m making is, is that we’ve got a lot to do in our relationship. President Fox is—if people take an objective look at his record, one of the things that I’m most proud of, and I think our country must be most appreciative of, is the stability of the Mexican economy. It’s important to have a trade partner that has got a stable economy. And, Mr. President, you’ve done a fine job of providing stability and increasing the net worth of your citizens, and that’s important for the American economy as well. The more net worth there is in Mexico, the more likely it is a Mexican may be wanting to buy a U.S. product—and vice versa, by the way. And so our trade has made a difference in the lives of our citizens, and your leadership has made a difference in the state of your economy.

So it’s good to be with you again, sir. Thank you for your warm hospitality.

President Fox. Thank you, President Bush. Thank you. I would like to mention with great satisfaction how productive the relation with the United States has been on bilateral basis, how the NAFTA, the Free Trade Agreement of North America has been, in order to promote development here in Mexico. And all this is part of a commitment and obligation of generating opportunities, making sure that we can build up, create jobs, create greater income, revenues for the families in Mexico, the *maquila*, the—[inaudible]—industry installed in the border of the country.

There is a deficit of 100,000 people. They want to give jobs to 100,000 people due to the great growth that’s going on. And not only in this field but in many other fields, in many other areas, we have been working. We might say that something that appeared in the mass media in Mexico—opposition of a state, clearly, very clearly in Mexico of the political parties—the Congress; the house of representatives;

the upper chamber, the Senators; the Executive power, the President of the Republic; the Governors of the States—everybody, everybody has a very clear idea in the topic of our relationship with the United States and, particularly, migration. It is a shared—shared—responsibility, and we understand very clearly here in Mexico all the main characters of the political scenario that we have to work so as to assume our responsibility.

Furthermore, we are working with Central American countries with the same purpose. Let us assume shared responsibilities. It is very clear for us that tomorrow, the Congress of the United States might approve any sort of bill, any sort of matter, migration-wise. It is a sovereign decision, of course, in the United States, but Mexico assumes its responsibilities to work with passion, with commitment, diligently, with our economy and developing opportunities for our people.

Our commitment with the citizenship is very broad. For example, with the United States, we work closely with Homeland Security, with the Ministry of the Interior here in Mexico, with Secretary Abascal. Secretary Abascal has a total support of the President of the Republic, and the possibility of adding the support of all the ministries and all the different Federal agencies that have to do with safety and security, so that we can give steps forward in this topic on the border.

We want to have a safe border for the benefit of our citizens and for the benefit of our relationship with the United States. Likewise, we have intensified our actions with the OASISS project. We are going after the criminals that are trafficking with people, that are, let's say, promoting illegally the movement of citizens to the United States—the alien smugglers. We have stopped more than 120 of these criminals, alien smugglers.

Likewise, in the southern border, as President Bush said, we are very active, very active on what has to do with patrol,

constructions of different stations so as to stop migrants, illegal migrants, people that are coming illegally to the Mexican territory, and sending them back to their own countries, with due respect to human rights. But we're doing an efficient work in that sense.

Now, with the same type of orientation, the idea that we share with President Bush, to consider an important element to thrust development in the Central American economies so that they can grow, they can generate jobs, that through this project and through this program they can generate actual opportunities in these countries, and this is a program of energy.

With this program, we want to achieve the construction of refineries for oil, different docks to build natural gas, sources of electric energy on the other hand, and conversion of natural gas—liquid, fluid gas to natural gas. It is a program that we shall approve next May, the Central American countries and Mexico. And we are cordially inviting the United States to attend, to know, to observe, to see the project, so as to know how can we interact with the strength and the capacity of North America so as to integrate a strong development and solid process in the Central American countries.

We have spoken—we have mentioned about the whole American canal. We have to reactivate the working commission in this area so that we can discuss ideas and give solutions for both parts, as we have always done, worked together, have a dialog, find solutions. And this is what we have proposed in reference to the total or whole American channel.

Thus, I want to thank President Bush for his attendance, for his presence, and for his work, as well as all his team.

Tomorrow in the trilateral meeting, we will be covering other topics—the topic of safety and security and then some other developing topics amongst the three countries, the three partners that belong to this

bloc of both economy, trade, and association for our prosperity and security of North America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. at the Fiesta Americana Condesa Cancun Hotel. President Fox spoke in Spanish, and

his remarks were translated by an interpreter. President Fox referred to Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada; and Secretary of Government Jose Carlos Maria Abascal Carranza of Mexico. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada in Cancun *March 30, 2006*

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. This is a—we've had a day full of talks. I had a really good meeting with the Prime Minister on the choppers, flying to the Mayan ruins. We've also had a very good meeting here. We talked about a lot of subjects.

I view the relationship with Canada as a vital relationship for the United States. The relationship, of course, is defined Government-to-Government. It's also defined people-to-people, and there's a lot of people in my country who respect Canada and have great relations with Canadians, and we intend to keep it that way.

The Prime Minister, of course, was—made an emphatic case for softwood lumber. And I appreciate his steely resolve to get something done. And I assured him that our intention is to negotiate in good faith, in a timely fashion, to resolve this issue. And I appreciate your—appreciate you pushing.

We also talked about the mutual values we share: respect for human life and human dignity. And along those lines, I want to thank you very much for two things: one, the quick response that your Government and your country gave to those who suffered by Katrina. It indicates the Canadian people's desire to help humans when they suffer. I appreciate very much your trip to Afghanistan and you and your

Government's support of their fledgling democracy, support of people that have been under the brutal thumb of tyrants—so brutal they wouldn't let young girls go to school—and it's representing the great Canadian tradition of really helping restore human dignity in people's lives.

The Prime Minister and I talked about a variety of subjects. We've got a lot of common interests. We've got a lot of trade between our countries—nearly half a billion dollars in—\$500 billion in the year 2005. And that trade means jobs on both sides of the border. And it's our intention to make sure that we continue to trade as freely as possible so that our people can benefit. All in all, Mr. Prime Minister, I found today to be a valuable day, and I want to thank you very much for your candor.

Prime Minister Harper. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

[At this point, Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

I'll try to repeat all of that. *[Laughter]* First of all, just to begin by saying that we had a long meeting both this morning and this afternoon, the President and I, discussing particularly global security issues of national and shared security interests.